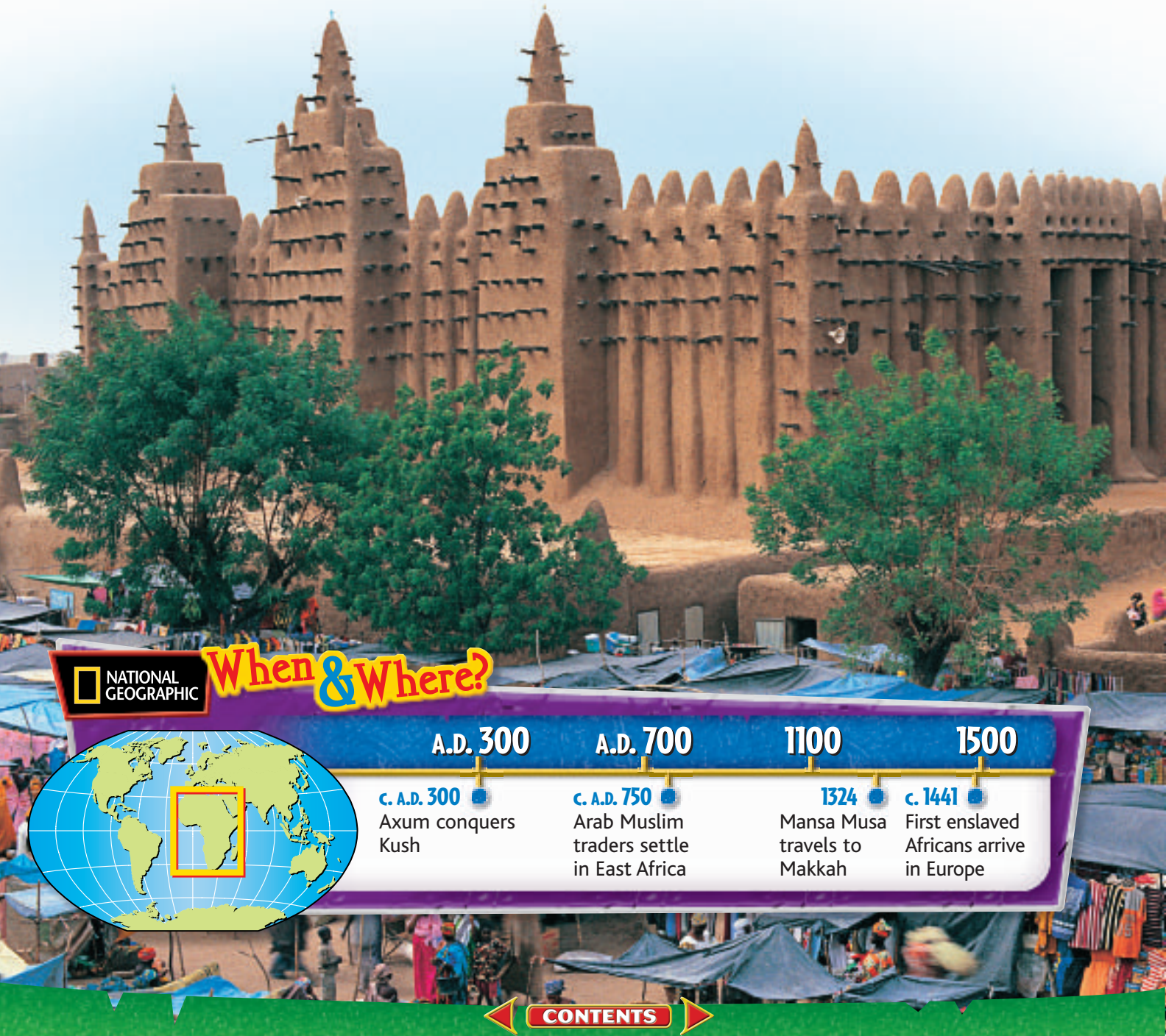
Chapter 13

Medieval Africa

440–441 Peter Adams/Getty Images

Islamic mosque and marketplace in Djenne, Mali ▼



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

When & Where?

A.D. 300

c. A.D. 300 — Axum conquers Kush

A.D. 700

c. A.D. 750 — Arab Muslim traders settle in East Africa

1100

1324 — Mansa Musa travels to Makkah

1500

c. 1441 — First enslaved Africans arrive in Europe

CONTENTS

Chapter Preview

While China enjoyed an artistic golden age, kingdoms in Africa grew rich from trading salt and gold. This chapter will tell you about an African ruler who led a great caravan on a long journey from North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula.

History Online
Chapter Overview Visit jat.glencoe.com for a preview of Chapter 13.

View the Chapter 13 video in the *World History: Journey Across Time* Video Program.

Section 1

The Rise of African Civilizations

Africa's geography influenced the rise of its civilizations. The growth of trade led to the exchange of goods and ideas.

Section 2

Africa's Government and Religion

African rulers developed different forms of government. Traditional religions, Christianity, and Islam shaped early African culture.

Section 3

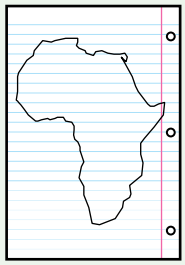
African Society and Culture

The family was the foundation of African society. A growing slave trade, however, would disrupt African society.

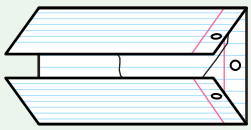
FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

Categorizing Information *Make this foldable to help you organize your notes about medieval Africa.*

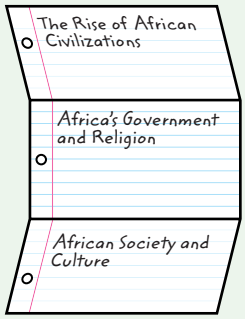
Step 1 *Draw a map of Africa on one side of a sheet of paper.*



Step 2 *Fold the sheet of paper into thirds from top to bottom.*



Step 3 *Unfold, turn the paper over (to the clean side), and label as shown.*



Reading and Writing
As you read about the civilizations of Africa, write down three main questions under each heading. Then write an answer to each question.

Chapter 13

Reading Social Studies

Reading Skill

Compare and Contrast

1 Learn It!

Making Comparisons

One way authors help you to understand information is by organizing material so that you can see how people, places, things, or events compare (are alike) or contrast (are different). Read the following passage:

The contrasts (differences) are highlighted in blue.

First, look at what is being compared or contrasted. In this case, it is the religions of two groups of people from Africa, highlighted in pink.

> **Some groups, like the Nanti in East Africa, thought people could talk directly with their god. Others, like the Igbo, thought their creator could only be spoken to through less powerful gods and goddesses who worked for him.**
>
> **Even though Africans practiced their religion differently in different places, their beliefs served similar purposes. They provided rules for living and helped people stay in touch with their history.**
>
> *—from page 463*

The comparisons (similarities) are highlighted in green.

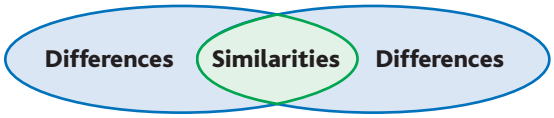
Reading Tip

As you read, look for words that signal the use of comparisons, such as like, similar, or different.

2 Practice It!

Create a Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram can help you to compare and contrast information. Differences are listed in the outside parts of each circle. Similarities are listed in the portion of the two circles that overlap. Read the paragraphs below. Then create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the roles of European and African women as stated in the paragraphs.



As in most medieval societies, women in Africa acted mostly as wives and mothers. Men had more rights and controlled much of what women did. Visitors to Africa, however, saw exceptions. European explorers were amazed to learn that women served as soldiers in some African kingdoms.

African women also won fame as rulers. In the A.D. 600s, Queen Dahia al-Kahina led the fight against the Muslim invasion of her kingdom, which was located about where Mauritania is today. Another woman ruler was Queen Nzinga, who ruled lands in what are now Angola and Congo. She spent almost 40 years battling Portuguese slave traders.

—from page 470

Read to Write

You will read about the rise and fall of many wealthy kingdoms in Africa during the Middle Ages. Choose one of the kingdoms and do research to find out what modern African nation occupies that same area today. Write a report to compare and contrast the modern nation and the early African kingdom.

Werner Forman/Art Resource, NY

3 Apply It!

As you read each section, make Venn diagrams to help you compare and contrast important details.

Section 1

The Rise of African Civilizations

Get Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

Egypt and Kush were Africa's first great civilizations. In this section, you will learn about African civilizations that developed later.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- Africa has a vast and varied landscape. *(page 445)*
- West African empires grew rich from trade. *(page 447)*
- Africa's rain forests blocked invaders and provided resources. *(page 450)*
- East African kingdoms and states became centers for trade and new ideas. *(page 451)*

Locating Places

Ghana (GAH•nuh)
Mali (MAH•lee)
Timbuktu (TIHM•BUHK•TOO)
Songhai (SAWNG•HY)
Axum (AHK•SOOM)

Meeting People

Sundiata Keita (sun•dee•AH•tuh KY•tuh)
Mansa Musa (MAHN•sah moo•SAH)
Sunni Ali (sun•EE ah•LEE)

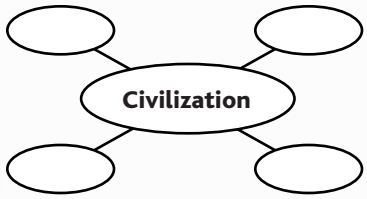
Building Your Vocabulary

plateau (pla•TOH)
griot (GREE•OH)
dhow (DOW)

Reading Strategy

Summarizing Information

Create diagrams describing the accomplishments of each medieval African civilization.



When & Where?

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

A.D. 300
c. A.D. 300 — Axum conquers Kush

A.D. 900
c. A.D. 750 — Arab Muslim traders settle in East Africa

1500
1468 — Sunni Ali captures Timbuktu

Africa's Geography

Main Idea **Africa has a vast and varied landscape.**

Reading Focus How can geography discourage people from exploring another place? Read to learn about the geographic features that made it difficult for people to travel across parts of Africa.

In 1906 a teacher named Hans Vischer explored what he called the "death road," a trade route connecting western Africa to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. No European or American had ever risked the journey before. The "death road" crossed more than 1,500 miles (2,414 km) of the Sahara, the world's largest desert. To get lost meant certain death.

Only nomads living in the region knew the way, but Vischer hoped to map the route. Like the desert nomads, his life depended upon finding oases. Upon his return, Vischer amazed people with stories of the Sahara. He told of swirling winds and shifting sand dunes.

▲ Mediterranean

▲ Desert

▲ Savanna

▲ Rain forest

Geography and Climate Zones in Africa

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Using Geography Skills

How people live in Africa depends upon where on the continent they make their home.

1. Which type of physical feature covers the largest area of Africa?
2. How might Africa's geography have affected trading patterns there?

Find NGS online map resources @ www.nationalgeographic.com/maps

(t)Christine Osborne/Lonely Planet Images, (tc)Frans Lemmens/Getty Images, (bc)Brand X Pictures, (b)Michael Dwyer/Stock Boston/PictureQuest

A Vast and Diverse Continent

Africa is the world's second-largest continent. The United States fits into Africa three times, with room to spare. The Equator slices through the middle of the continent. Hot, steamy rain forests stretch along each side of it. Yet the rain forests cover only 10 percent of the land.

Most of Africa lies in the tropics. Here dry, sweeping grasslands reach for thousands of miles. Most of the tropical grasslands, known as savannas, have high temperatures and uneven rains. These wide-open grasslands are perfect for raising herds of animals. For much of Africa's history, the people of the savanna were hunters and herders.

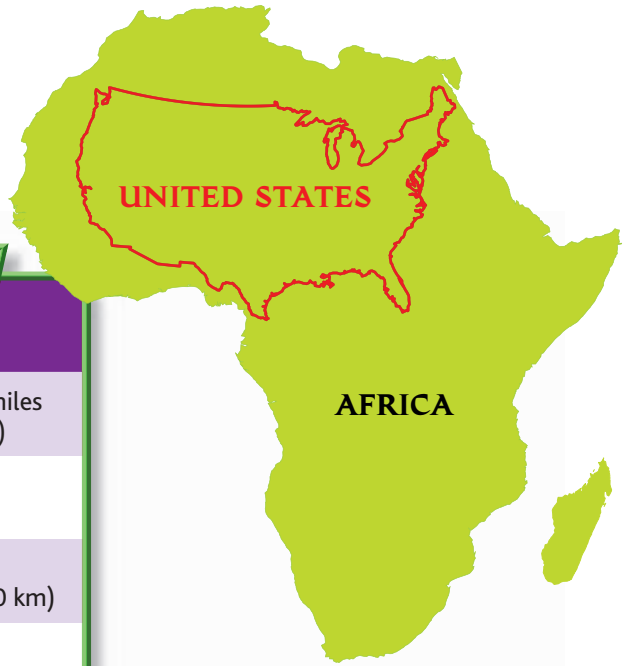
North and south of the savannas are the deserts—the Sahara to the north and the Kalahari to the southwest. For many years, these unmapped seas of sand blocked travel. People had to follow the coastline if they wanted to get past the deserts. Areas of mild climate, good for growing crops, are found along the Mediterranean Sea in northwest Africa and in the south.

The African Plateau

Almost all of Africa, except the coastal plains, rests on a **plateau** (pla•TOH)—an area of high flat land. Rivers spill off the plateau in crashing waterfalls and rapids, cutting off inland water routes. Although the Nile River is Africa's longest river, the Congo River winds 2,700 miles (4,345 km) through Africa, near the Equator.

In the east, movements of the earth's crust millions of years ago cracked the continent, and parts of the plateau's surface dropped. This formed the Great Rift Valley, where some of the earliest human fossils have been unearthed. The valley extends through eastern Africa from present-day Mozambique to the Red Sea.

Reading Check **Cause and Effect** What caused the Great Rift Valley?



Comparing Africa to the U.S.

	Africa	United States
Size	11,667,159 square miles (30,217,894 sq. km)	3,794,085 square miles (9,826,680 sq. km)
Population Today	about 891 million people	about 291 million people
Longest River	Nile River 4,160 miles (6,693 km)	Missouri River 2,565 miles (4,130 km)
Largest Desert	Sahara 3,500,000 square miles (9,065,000 sq. km)	Mojave 15,000 square miles (38,850 sq. km)

Sources: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts,* 2004; *World Population Data Sheet,* 2003; *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 1990

Understanding Charts

Africa has a land area roughly three times that of the United States.

1. How does the size of the Sahara compare to the size of the United States?
2. How does the population of Africa compare to that of the United States?

West African Empires

Main Idea **West African empires grew rich from trade.**

Reading Focus What would you rather have–a pound of gold or a pound of salt? Both of these goods were important to West Africans and helped them build large trading empires.

Stories of golden lands south of the Sahara seemed hard to believe. There's a country, claimed one story, "where gold grows like plants in the same way as carrots do, and is plucked at sunset."

The Berbers who told the tales had seen the gold with their own eyes. The Berbers, the first known people to settle in North Africa, crossed the Sahara to trade with people in western Africa. They began making the trip about 400 B.C.

For hundreds of years, Berber traders carried goods on horses and donkeys, which often died in the hot Sahara. When the Romans conquered North Africa, they introduced camels from central Asia. Camels, nicknamed "ships of the desert," revolutionized trade. Their broad feet did not sink in the sand, and their humps stored fat for food. In addition, they could travel many days without water.

Traders grouped hundreds, maybe even thousands, of camels together to form caravans. They traded salt and cloth from North Africa and the Sahara for gold and ivory from western Africa. The trade led to the growth of cities in western Africa. Eventually, rulers of these cities began to build a series of empires. During the Middle Ages, these African empires were bigger than most European kingdoms in wealth and size. The first empire to develop was Ghana.

▲ While many of the caravans that crossed the desert going to and from West Africa included about 1,000 camels, some caravans may have had as many as 12,000 camels. ***What were some of the items traded by caravans?***

Rise of Ghana

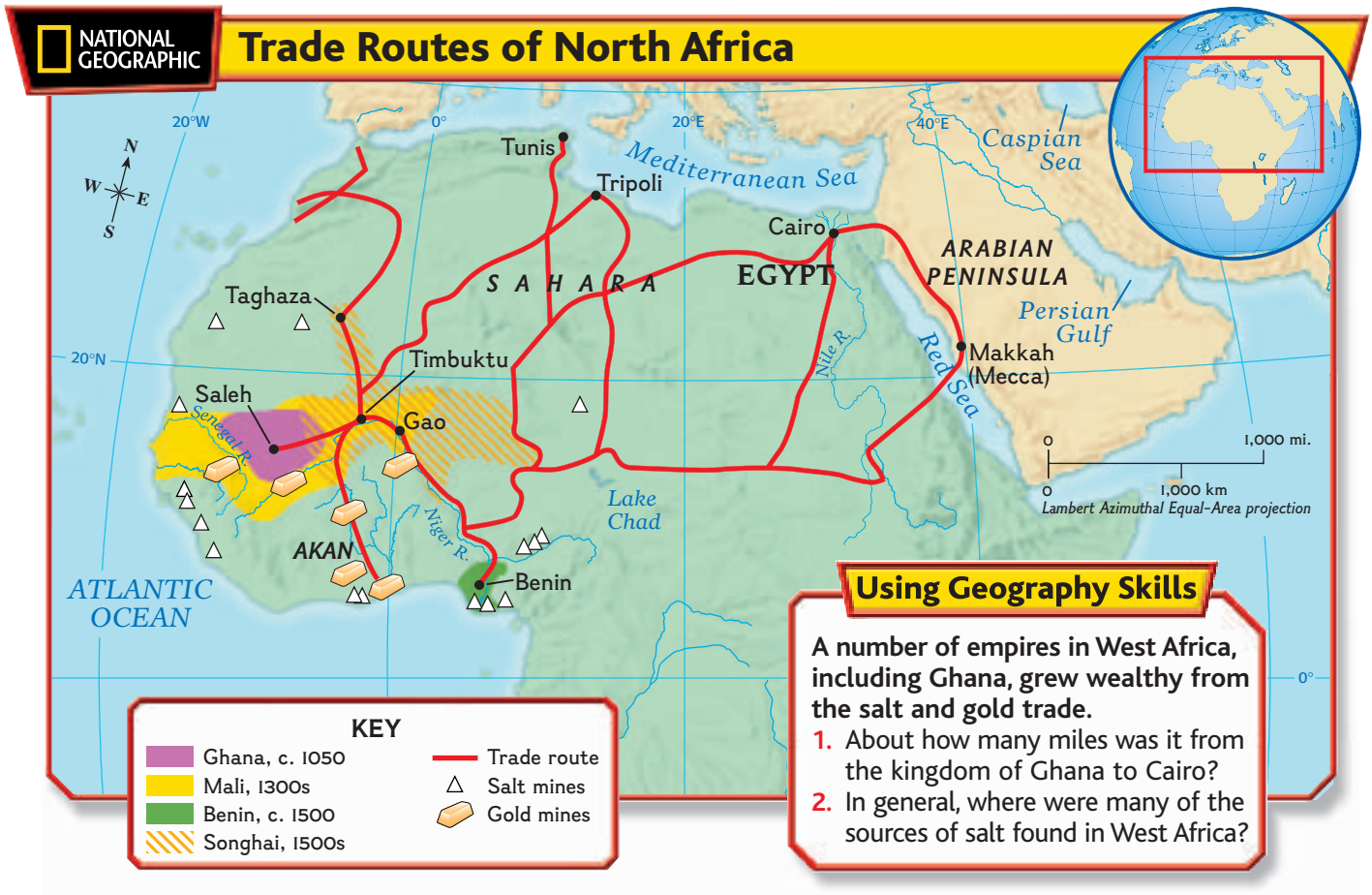
Ghana (GAH • nuh) rose to power in the A.D. 400s. It was a "crossroads of trade," a place where trade routes come together. Trade routes reached across the Sahara into North Africa and down the Niger River (NY • juhr) to kingdoms in the rain forest. Some extended all the way to Africa's northeastern coast.

For traders to meet, they had to pass through Ghana. Passage came at a price—a tax paid to Ghana's rulers. These taxes made Ghana rich. Why did traders pay the taxes? First, Ghana knew how to make iron weapons. Like ancient Kush, it used these weapons to conquer its neighbors. Although Ghana owned no gold mines, it controlled the people who did. Second, Ghana built a huge army. "When the king of Ghana calls up his army," said one trader, "he can put 200,000 men in the field."

Third, people wanted the trade items, especially salt and gold, at almost any price. West Africans needed salt to flavor and preserve food, and their bodies needed salt to stay healthy. They paid taxes to get salt from Berber mines in the Sahara. In turn, the Berbers paid taxes to get gold to sell at a huge profit in Europe.

Rise of Mali

Ghana did not last forever, however. The discovery of new gold mines outside Ghana's control reduced the taxes it collected. In addition, heavy farming robbed the soil of minerals and made it harder to grow enough crops to feed people. Constant fighting also hurt Ghana. Ghana's rulers had accepted the religion of Islam, but they fought with North African Muslims who wanted to build empires of their own.



Volkmar Kurt Wentzel/National Geographic Image Collection

After Ghana fell in the 1200s, the kingdom of **Mali** (MAH • lee) replaced it. West African **griots** (GREE • ohz), or storytellers, give credit to a great warrior-king named **Sundiata Keita** (sun • dee • AH • tuh KY • tuh)—the "Lion Prince." Sundiata, who ruled from 1230 to 1255, seized the capital of Ghana in 1240. He then won control of lands from the Atlantic coast to the trading city of **Timbuktu** (TIHM • BUHK • TOO) and beyond. His conquests put Mali in control of the gold-mining areas, allowing him to rebuild the gold and salt trade.

Rise of Songhai Mali began a slow decline after the death of its last strong king, **Mansa Musa** (MAHN • sah moo • SAH), in 1332. The kings who followed failed to stop Berber conquerors, who for a time even ruled Timbuktu.

In 1468 **Sunni Ali** (sun • EE ah • LEE), the leader of **Songhai** (SAWNG • HY), stormed into Timbuktu and drove out the Berbers. He then began a campaign of conquest. Sunni Ali used Songhai's location along the Niger River to his advantage. He ordered a fleet of war canoes to seize control of the river trade. His armies then swept westward into the Sahara, where they took over Berber salt mines. By the time of his death in 1492, Sunni Ali had built the largest empire in West Africa.

The empire lasted almost 100 more years. In 1591, however, a small army from the Arab kingdom of Morocco crossed the Sahara. Soldiers with cannons, guns, and gunpowder easily cut down Songhai soldiers armed with swords, spears, and bows and arrows. Within months, Songhai's empire was gone.

Reading Check **Analyze** Why did West Africa become the center of three large trade empires?

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The Way It Was

Focus on Everyday Life

Africa's Salt Mines Salt mining began in the Sahara in the Middle Ages. Ancient miners worked underground and in sand dunes to extract solid blocks of salt. The salt trade became a successful business for the African people. In ancient times, salt was so desirable that it was traded ounce for ounce for gold.

There are many salt deposits in western Africa because part of the desert was once a shallow sea made up of salt water. When the sea dried up, salt was left behind.

People need a small amount of salt to stay healthy. It is lost when people and animals sweat, so people need some in their food. In ancient times, before refrigerators or canned foods were invented, salt was used to keep foods from going bad. It also was used to add flavor to food.

African salt mine today

Connecting to the Past

1. How do salt deposits form?
2. Why do you think salt was so valuable that it was traded ounce for ounce for gold?

Kingdoms of the Rain Forest

Main Idea **Africa's rain forests blocked invaders and provided resources.**

Reading Focus What does your state make that people in other places want to buy? Africa's rain forest kingdoms had something the savanna kingdoms wanted. It was not gold or salt, but something just as valuable–food.

Ghana, Mali, and Songhai ruled the wide-open savannas. However, the dense rain forests along the Equator kept them from expanding to the southern coast. People living in the rain forests built their own kingdoms and empires. They included Benin, which arose in the Niger delta, and Kongo, which formed in the Congo River basin.

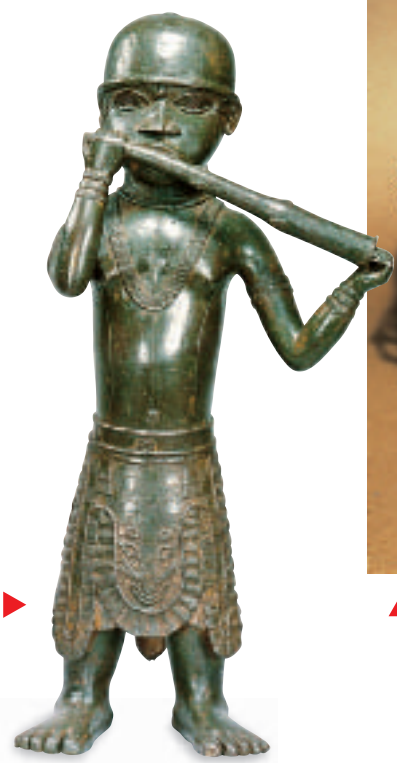
Griots who live in the Niger delta still tell stories about King Ewuare (eh•WOO•ah•ray), who founded the empire of Benin around 1440. In describing his ancestor's accomplishments, one storyteller boasted:

> **"He fought against and captured 201 towns and villages. . . . He took their . . . rulers captive and caused the people to pay tribute to him."**
>
> **—J.V. Egharevba,**
> ***A Short History of Benin***

Farmers in the rain forest kingdoms enjoyed many natural advantages, including farmable soil and a warm, wet climate. In cleared-out areas of the forest, they often produced a surplus, or extra supply, of foods like bananas, yams, or rice.

The Kingdom of Benin

◀ **Bronze statue of queen from Benin**



Statue of horn player from Benin ▶

▲ **This bronze casting honored the king of Benin.** ***Around when was the kingdom of Benin founded?***

(l)Werner Forman/Art Resource, NY, (c)The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1964 (1978.412.310), (r)The British Museum, London/Bridgeman Art Library

Food surpluses supported rulers and a class of artisans. Kongo weavers, for example, wove fabrics from bark and plant fibers that looked to Europeans like velvet. In Benin, artists excelled at sculpting and carving metal, wood, and ivory.

Rain forest kingdoms that bordered on the dry savannas traded surplus food and crafts for copper, salt, and leather goods from the savannas. Later, when the Europeans arrived, traders from Benin and Kongo met ships along the coast. They traded, among other things, captives taken in war.

Reading Check **Describe** What advantages did farmers in the rain forests have over farmers in other parts of Africa?

East Africa

Main Idea **East African kingdoms and states became centers for trade and new ideas.**

Reading Focus Have you ever met someone who used to live somewhere far away? Did their ideas help you to think about the world differently? Read to learn how new ideas arrived along the coast of East Africa.

People today in the East African country of Ethiopia trace their history back to 1005 B.C. In that year, Queen Makeda rose to the throne of a great empire called Saba or Sheba. According to the *Glory of Kings*, Ethiopia's oldest written history, Makeda traveled to meet with King Solomon, ruler

African Trading Empires *A.D. 100–1600*

	Axum	Ghana	Mali	Songhai	Zimbabwe
Location	East Africa	West Africa	West Africa	West Africa	SE Africa
Time Period	c. 100–1400	c. 400–1200	c. 1200–1450	c. 1000–1600	c. 700–1450
Goods Traded	ivory, frankincense, myrrh, slaves	iron products, animal products, salt, gold	salt, gold	salt, gold	gold, copper, ivory
Key Facts	King Ezana converted to Christianity; made it the official religion.	Taxes from traders passing through made Ghana rich.	King Mansa Musa built mosques and libraries.	Songhai gained control of West African trade by conquering Timbuktu and mastering trade by river.	Kings Mutota and Matope built the region's biggest empire.

Understanding Charts

Large trading kingdoms developed in several areas of Africa.

1. Which kingdom developed earliest?
2. **Generalize** What were some of the common trade items of the West African empires?

▲ Picture of a dhow, an African sailing vessel

▲ A stele, or monument, from Axum

Using Geography Skills

Prosperous trade cities, such as Mogadishu and Kilwa, developed along Africa's east coast.

1. Into what bodies of water did trade routes from eastern Africa extend?
2. Describe the location of Zimbabwe.

of the Israelites. On her return, Makeda introduced ancient Israel's religion to her empire. Over time, eastern Africa would feel the impact of two other religions—Christianity and Islam.

The Rise of Axum Like other empires, Saba declined. However, Ethiopia, known in ancient times as Abyssinia, did not. Its power was centered in a city-state called **Axum** (AHK•SOOM). Axum owed its strength to its location on the Red Sea. Goods from Africa flowed into Axum, which served as a trading center for the ancient Mediterranean and East Asian worlds.

Axum fought neighboring Kush for control of trade routes to inland Africa. Around A.D. 300, King Ezana of Axum sent his armies against Kush and defeated it. A few years later, Ezana helped to bring a new religion to Africa when he converted to Christianity. In A.D. 334 he made it the official religion of Axum. Within a few hundred years, another religion—Islam—brought many changes to Axum and other trading states along Africa's eastern coast.

Coastal City-States Arab traders from the Arabian Peninsula had been coming to eastern Africa long before the rise of Islam in the early A.D. 600s. They invented a wind-catching, triangular sail that let them sail to Africa. The sails powered sailboats called **dhows** (DOWZ).

(t)Nik Wheeler/CORBIS, (b)Merilyn Thorold/Bridgeman Art Library

CONTENTS

In the A.D. 700s, many Arab Muslim traders settled in East African city-states. Here Africans and Arab Muslims shared goods and ideas. By the 1300s, a string of trading ports extended down the East African coast. They included Mogadishu (MAH • guh • DIH • shoo), Kilwa, Mombasa, and Zanzibar. These ports became major links in an Indian Ocean trading network. They traded with places as far away as China.

▲ Some of the walls of Great Zimbabwe still exist. ***What trade goods from the interior of Africa passed through Zimbabwe?***

Great Zimbabwe Another great trading center known as Zimbabwe (zihm • BAH • bway) arose inland in southeastern Africa. Founded around A.D. 700 by the Shona people, Zimbabwe supplied gold, copper, and ivory to the East African coast. From there, African goods were shipped to Arabia, Persia, India, and China.

During the 1400s, two kings—Mutota and his son Matope—made Zimbabwe into a large empire. It stretched from south of the Zambezi River to the Indian Ocean. Evidence of Zimbabwe's power can still be seen at Great Zimbabwe, the empire's capital. Here more than 300 huge stone buildings stand—silent reminders of Zimbabwe's past greatness.

Reading Check **Explain** How did new technology help East Africa's trade?

Section 1 Review

History Online
Homework Helper Need help with the material in this section? Visit jat.glencoe.com

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

- The continent of Africa has varied landscapes, including rain forests, grasslands, and deserts.
- Beginning in about A.D. 300, a succession of kingdoms, including Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, arose in West Africa.
- Rain forest kingdoms, including Benin and Kongo, traded with the surrounding savanna kingdoms.
- In East Africa, trade with the Arab world helped kingdoms and port cities grow.

What Did You Learn?

1. What items were traded in the kingdoms of West Africa?

Critical Thinking

2. **Organizing Information** Draw a chart like the one below. For each region, write names of the kingdoms and/or city-states that developed there.

West Africa	African Rain Forests	East Africa

3. **Analyze** What city-states grew as trading ports in East Africa, and why were they successful?
4. **Compare and Contrast** Which African kingdoms developed away from the coast? How did their economies compare to other African kingdoms?
5. **Reading Compare and Contrast** Create a Venn diagram that shows the similarities and differences of two African kingdoms.

MIT Collection/CORBIS

SUNDIATA
THE HUNGERING LION

Retold by Kenny Mann

Before You Read

The Scene: This story takes place in Mali on the continent of Africa in the 1100s.

The Characters: Balla Fasseke is the griot who tells the story of Sundiata. Sundiata is the Lion King of Mali. Sogolon and Maghan Kon Fatta are Sundiata's parents. Sassouma is the first wife of Maghan Kon Fatta. Sumanguru is a rival king.

The Plot: The Lion King of Mali, Sundiata, is denied the throne. Sundiata has to prove that he is the rightful king.

Vocabulary Preview

guardian: one who takes care of another person

infirmity: weakness

brewed: prepared by boiling

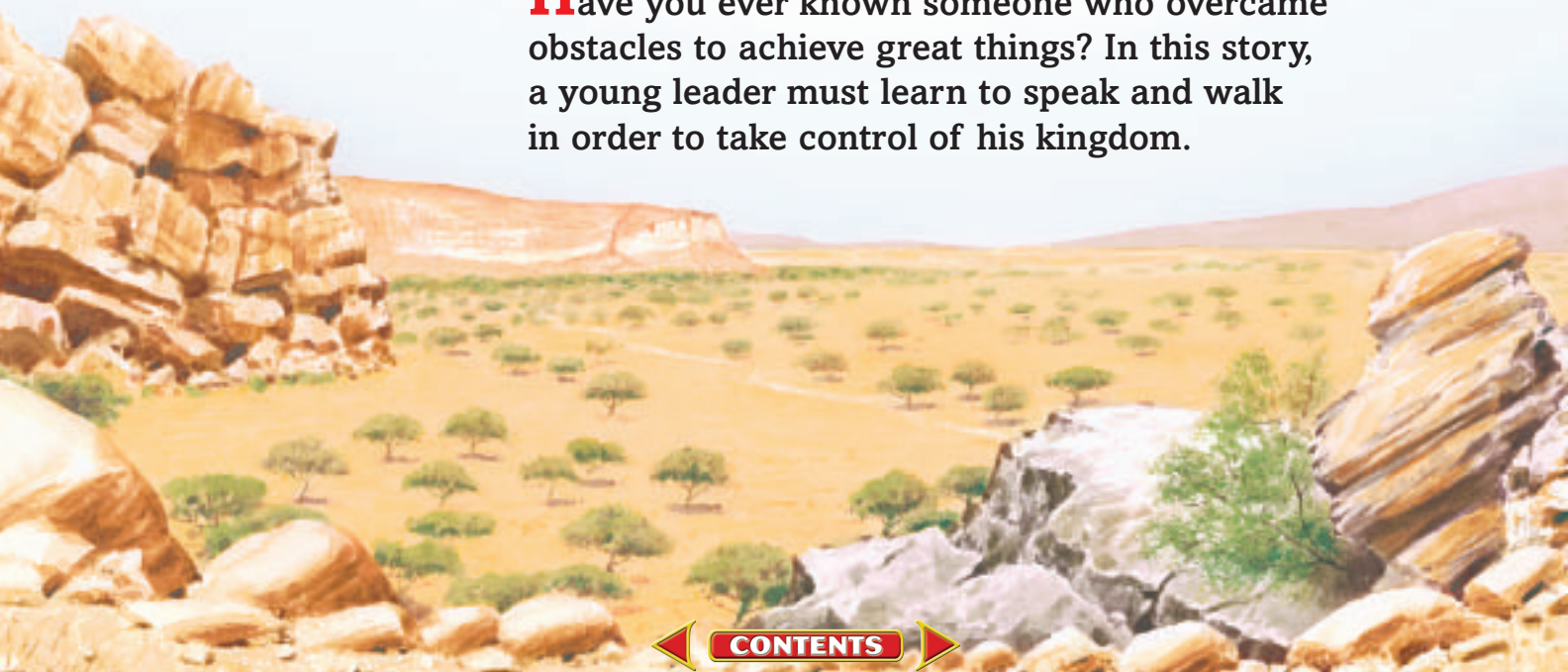
smiths: metalworkers

multitude: a great number of people

exile: period of time away from one's country

lance: a steel-tipped spear

Have you ever known someone who overcame obstacles to achieve great things? In this story, a young leader must learn to speak and walk in order to take control of his kingdom.



As You Read

Keep in mind that this story is a mixture of fact and legend. However, a king named Sundiata did conquer new lands and expand trade while he ruled the kingdom of Mali.

O people, hear my story! I am Balla Fasseke (bah•lah fah•SEE•kay) of Mali. I am a *griot.*[1] I am the guardian of the word. In my mind rest the stories of my people and the history of our land. O hear me and remember, for I speak the truth.

Long, long ago, the last king of Ghana fell to the sword of Sumanguru, the Sosso king; Sumanguru, the cruel warrior and mighty sorcerer; Sumanguru, who was to meet his fate at the hands of Sundiata, the Lion King of Mali.

I am Sundiata's *griot.* O hear me, for I speak the truth!

Sundiata was born of Sogolon, who married Maghan Kon Fatta, the ruler of Mali, whose totem[2] was the lion. Sogolon was brought to the king as a maiden, disfigured by a hunchback and ill looks. But she was said to possess the mighty spirit of a buffalo, strong and courageous. Her coming had been foretold to the king, and he took Sogolon as his wife and came to love her.

When Sundiata was born, the king rejoiced. The great royal drums carried the news all over the kingdom. But his first wife, Sassouma, was jealous. Her son should inherit the throne! What need had her husband of another son? She vowed that Sundiata would never become king.

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[1] **griot:** storyteller
[2] **totem:** animal or plant serving as the symbol of a family or clan

In time, Sassouma saw that she had nothing to fear, for Sundiata was stricken by a strange infirmity. He could neither speak nor walk! How great was Sogolon's sorrow! For seven long years, she tried to cure her son. She consulted with all the wise men of the kingdom and brewed herbs and potions, but to no avail.[3] And Sundiata's father, King Maghan Kon Fatta, despaired. But his *griot,* who was my father, advised the king. "The young seed must endure the storm," he said. "And from this small seed shall spring a great tree."

One day, when the king felt death approach, he called the child to him. "I shall give you the gift each king gives to his heir," he said. And on that day, my people, the king gave me—Balla Fasseke—to Sundiata to be his *griot,* as my father had been the king's *griot,* and his father before that. And on that day, for the first time in his life, Sundiata spoke. "Balla, you shall be my *griot,*" he said. And the king knew that his son—the son of the lion and the buffalo—was worthy to be king.

But when Maghan Kon Fatta died, the councilors ignored his wishes. It was the son of Sassouma who ascended the throne, and not Sundiata, the rightful heir. And Sassouma persecuted Sogolon and her son with evil hatred and banished them to a dark corner of the palace. Oh, how Sogolon's tears flowed in her unhappiness! When Sundiata saw his mother's despair, he looked at her calmly and said, "Today I will walk." Then he sent me, Balla Fasseke, to the royal forges.[4] "Tell the smiths to make me the sturdiest iron rod possible," he ordered.

[3] **avail:** benefit
[4] **forges:** furnaces where metal is heated and shaped

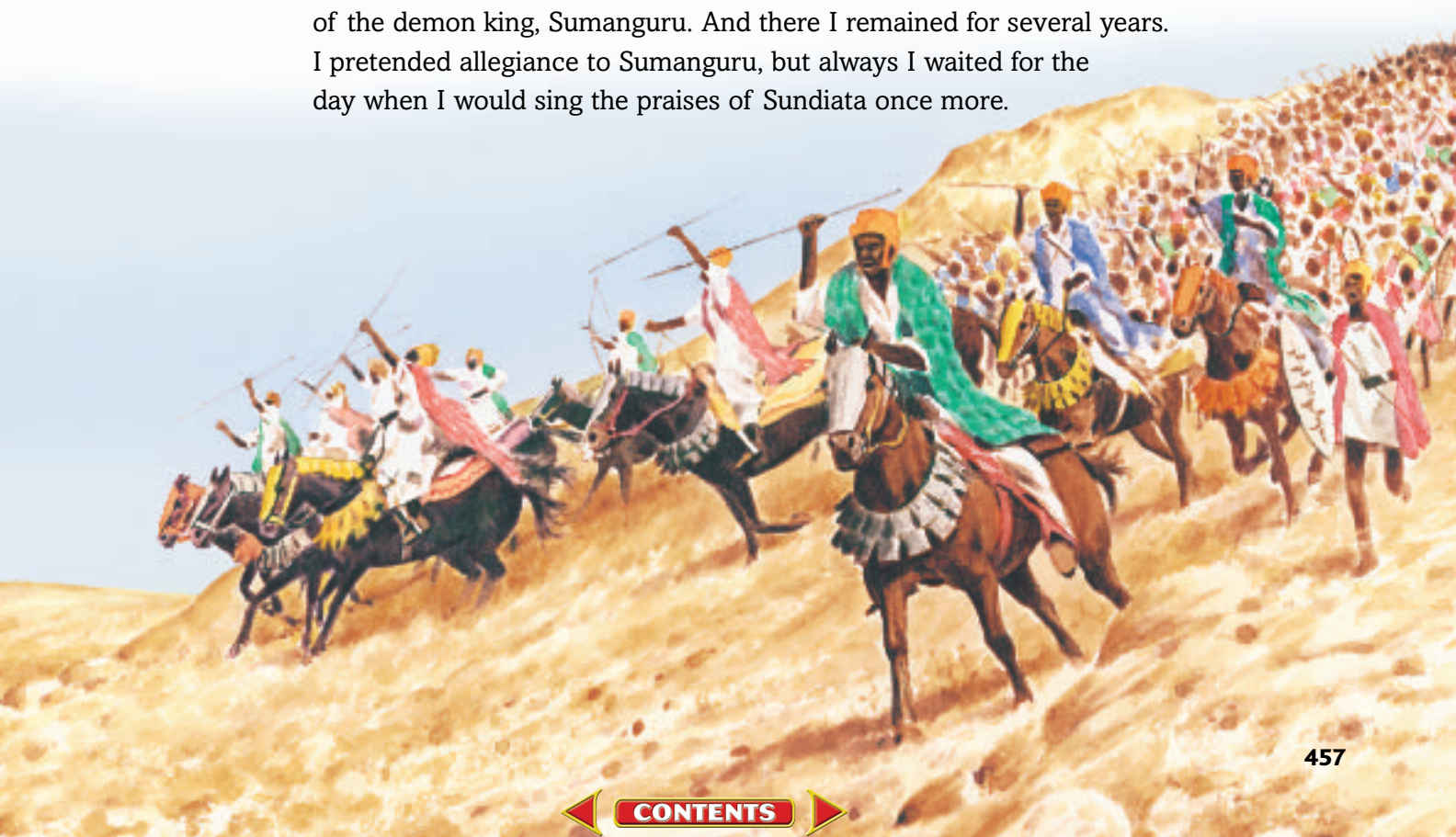
Six men were needed to carry the iron rod to Sogolon's house. They threw it on the ground before Sundiata. A huge multitude of people had gathered to see if Sundiata would walk. "Arise, young lion!" I commanded. "Roar, and may the land know that from henceforth, it has a master!"

Sundiata gripped the rod with his two hands and held it upright in the ground. Beads of sweat poured from his face. A deathly silence gripped the people. All at once, with a mighty thrust, Sundiata stood upright. The crowd gasped. The iron rod was bent like a bow. And Sogolon, who had been dumb with amazement, suddenly burst into song:

Oh day, oh beautiful day,
Oh day, day of joy,
Allah Almighty, this is the finest
day you have created,
My son is going to walk!
Hear me, people, for I speak the truth!

Sundiata threw away the rod, and his first steps were those of a giant.

From that day on, Sundiata grew in strength. He became a fine hunter and was much loved by all the people. But Sassouma, whose son was now king, feared Sundiata's growing power. Her plots to kill him failed. And she knew that I would perform any deed to bring Sundiata to the throne. So, to separate us, Sassouma sent me far away to the court of the demon king, Sumanguru. And there I remained for several years. I pretended allegiance to Sumanguru, but always I waited for the day when I would sing the praises of Sundiata once more.



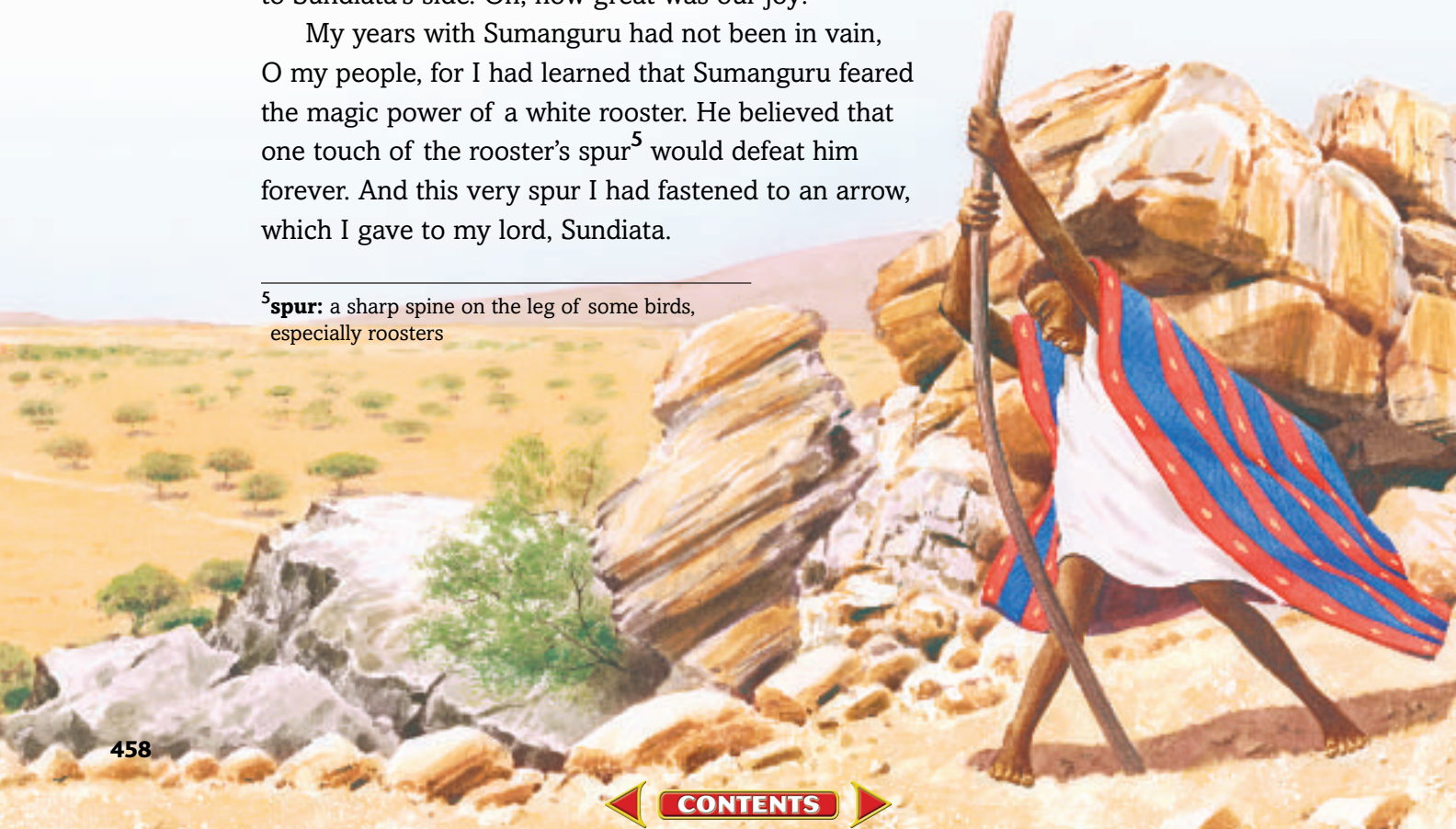
Sogolon fled the palace and took Sundiata far from Sassouma's hatred. For seven years they lived in exile, finding food and shelter wherever they could. At last, they came to the city of Mema. Here they met with good luck, for the king of Mema took a liking to Sundiata and treated him like a son. He admired Sundiata's courage and leadership. This king decided to make the young boy his heir and teach him the arts of government and war. And thus, Sundiata grew to manhood.

One day, messengers came running to Sundiata. "Sumanguru has invaded Mali!" they cried. "The king and his mother, Sassouma, have fled. Only you can save our people. Return, young lion, and reclaim your throne!"

This, O people, was the moment of Sundiata's destiny. The king of Mema gave him half his forces. And as Sundiata rode at their head, more and more men joined him until a great army thundered across the plains. And from far-distant Mali, Sumanguru, too, raced to meet his destiny. And I, O my people, I followed, for I knew that soon I would be reunited with Sundiata, my Lion King.

And so it was. Sundiata led his army from Mema, and Sumanguru came from Mali. The two great armies met in battle on the plains of Kirina. I took my chance and escaped at last from Sumanguru. Through the thick clouds of dust and the battle cries of the warriors, I galloped to Sundiata's side. Oh, how great was our joy!

My years with Sumanguru had not been in vain, O my people, for I had learned that Sumanguru feared the magic power of a white rooster. He believed that one touch of the rooster's spur[5] would defeat him forever. And this very spur I had fastened to an arrow, which I gave to my lord, Sundiata.



[5] **spur:** a sharp spine on the leg of some birds, especially roosters

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With deadly aim, Sundiata sent the arrow speeding across the battlefield toward Sumanguru. True as a hawk in flight, it met its mark, grazing the sorcerer's shoulder. With a great scream of fear, Sumanguru turned on his horse and fled.

Far away he rode, to the caves of Mount Koulikoro. There we saw Sumanguru, the demon king, fall to his knees and turn to stone. His soldiers, discouraged by his flight, ceased to fight and were defeated.

And so Sundiata returned to Mali to reclaim his throne, and I, Balla Fasseke, went with him to sing of his glory. There waited the twelve kings who had helped Sundiata in exile. Each thrust his lance into the earth before Sundiata. "We shall be united!" they proclaimed. "You have restored peace to our lands. We give you our kingdoms to rule in your great wisdom!" The drums beat out the news. The warriors danced in a joyous frenzy. And the crowd sent a mighty cry to the heavens: "Wassa, Wassa, Ayé!"

And thus did I bear witness to the birth of the great kingdom of Mali. And thus did I see Sundiata become its first emperor.

So listen, O my people, and remember, for I speak the truth. May you live to tell this story to your children, that the name of Sundiata—the Lion King—shall live forever.

Responding to the Reading

1. Why did the king give Sundiata a griot?
2. Foreshadowing is when a storyteller gives you hints of something to come later. This story contains many suggestions that foreshadow Sundiata's successful reign as king. Identify three such hints in the first six paragraphs.
3. **Predict** How might the story be different if Balla Fasseke had not been sent to the court of Sumanguru?
4. **Analyze** Why do you think Sundiata did not walk after receiving his mother's treatments but *did* walk when his half-brother was made king?
5. Reading **Read to Write** Suppose you are Sundiata's father. Write a brief speech stating your reasons for choosing Sundiata to be the next king.

Section 2

Africa's Government and Religion

Get Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

In Section 1, you read about some of the kingdoms and empires that developed in Africa. To hold their kingdoms and empires together, Africans had to create their own governments. One unifying force was the religion of Islam, but many Africans continued to practice their traditional religious beliefs as well.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- The growth of West African empires led to the growth of centralized governments ruled by kings. *(page 461)*
- Traditional African religions shared certain beliefs and provided a guide for living together. *(page 463)*
- Islam played an important role in medieval Africa, but long-held African beliefs and customs still remained strong. *(page 464)*

Locating Places

Makkah (MAH•kuh)

Meeting People

Olaudah Equiano (oh•LOW•duh EHK•wee•AHN•oh)

Ibn Battuta (IH•buhn bat•TOO•tah)

Askia Muhammad (ahs•KEE•uh moh•HAH•muhd)

Building Your Vocabulary

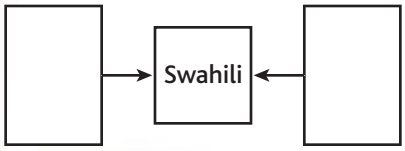
clan (KLAN)

sultan (SUHL•tuhn)

Swahili (swah•HEE•lee)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information Use a diagram to show the components of Swahili culture and language.



When & Where?

1300 | 1400 | 1500

1324 Mansa Musa travels to Makkah

1352 Ibn Battuta arrives in West Africa

1492 Sunni Ali dies

Government and Society

Main Idea **The growth of West African empires led to the growth of centralized governments ruled by kings.**

Reading Focus What makes a system of government effective? Read to learn how African rulers governed their empires.

The loud thumping of drums called the citizens of Ghana to a meeting with the king. Anybody with a complaint could speak. In the royal courtyard, the king sat in an open silk tent. He wore a cap of gold and a jewel-covered robe. Royal officials surrounded him. Guard dogs with gold and silver collars stood watch. Before talking to the king, subjects poured dust over their heads or fell to the ground. Bowing, they stated their business and waited for the king's reply.

Ruler and Subject This, said Arab travelers, was how government worked in West Africa. Kings settled arguments, managed trade, and protected the empire. But they expected complete obedience in return.

With the growth of empires, Africans invented new ways to govern themselves. The most successful states, like Ghana, formed some type of central authority. Power usually rested with a king—or, in a few cases, a queen.

Both rulers and people benefited. Merchants received favors from the kings, and the kings received taxes from the merchants. Local rulers kept some power, and the kings in turn received their loyalty. This allowed kingdoms to grow richer and to extend their control over a larger area. The system also helped keep the peace.

Ghana's Government The kings of Ghana relied on help from a council of ministers, or group of close advisers. As the empire grew, rulers divided it into provinces. Lesser kings, often conquered leaders, governed each of these areas. Beneath them, district chiefs oversaw smaller districts. Each district usually included a chief's **clan** (KLAN)—a group of people descended from the same ancestor.

Kings held tightly to their power. They insisted that local rulers send their sons to the royal court. They rode through the countryside seeking reports of injustice or rebellion. Most important, they controlled trade.

Nobody could trade without the king's permission. Also, nobody could own gold nuggets except the king. People traded only in gold dust. "If kings did otherwise," said one Arab traveler, "gold would become so abundant as practically to lose its value."

▼ **The carving below shows a king of Benin on his throne. The ivory armband (lower left) was worn by the king during ceremonies.** ***Why did African kings allow local rulers to keep some power?***

(t)Werner Forman/Art Resource, NY, (b)HIP/Scala/Art Resource, NY

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Primary Source

Ghana Profits From Trade

Al Bekri described the way Ghana taxed merchants to increase its own wealth.

"The king [of Ghana] exacts the right of one *dinar* of gold on each donkey-load of salt that enters his country, and two *dinars* of gold on each load of salt that goes out. A load of copper carries a duty of five *mitqals* and a load of merchandise ten *mitqals*. The best gold in the country comes from Ghiaru, a town situated eighteen days' journey from the capital [Kumbi]."

— Abdullah Abu-Ubayd al Bekri, "Ghana in 1067"

▲ Ghana's wealth came from trade caravans.

DBQ Document-Based Question

Which do you think has more worth, a dinar or a mitqal? Why?

One thing about Ghana's government, however, confused outsiders. "It is their custom," exclaimed an Arab writer, "that the kingdom is inherited only by the son of the king's sister." In Arab states, property passed through a man's sons, not the sons of his sister. In Ghana, the throne went to the king's nephew.

Mali's Government Mali followed the example of Ghana, but on a larger scale. It had more territory, more people, and more trade, so royal officials had more responsibilites. One supervised fishing on the Niger. Another looked after the empire's forests. A third oversaw farming, and a fourth managed money.

Kings divided the empire into provinces, like Ghana. However, Sundiata, the founder of Mali, put his generals in charge of them. People accepted it because the generals protected them from invaders. Also, the generals often came from the provinces they ruled.

Mali's other great king, Mansa Musa, rewarded citizens with gold, land, and horses to keep them loyal. He granted military heroes the "National Honor of the Trousers." As one Arab said:

> **"Whenever a hero adds to the lists of his exploits, the king gives him a pair of wide trousers. . . . [T]he greater the number of the knight's [soldier's] exploits, the bigger the size of his trousers."**
>
> **—Al-Dukhari, as quoted in *Topics in West African History***

Because only the king and royal family could wear sewn clothes, this was a big honor indeed. Most people wore only wrapped clothes.

Songhai's Government Songhai built on the traditions of Ghana and Mali. Its founder, Sunni Ali, divided his empire into provinces. However, he never finished setting up his empire. Sunni continually moved, fighting one battle or another.

In 1492 Sunni Ali died mysteriously on a return trip home. Some say he drowned while crossing a stream. Others say his enemies killed him. The next year, a Songhai general named Muhammad Ture seized control of the government. Unlike Sunni Ali, Muhammad Ture was a loyal Muslim. His religious ideas affected Songhai's government.

Reading Check **Contrast** How was Mali ruled differently from Ghana?

Giraudon/Art Resource, NY

CONTENTS

Traditional African Religions

Main Idea **Traditional African religions shared certain beliefs and provided a guide for living together.**

Reading Focus What questions do most religions try to answer? As you read this section, look for questions answered by traditional African religions.

For centuries, Europeans believed Africans did not have a religion. **Olaudah Equiano** (oh • LOW • duh EHK • wee • AHN • oh), a member of the Igbo, disagreed. The Igbo, he wrote, "believe that there is one Creator of all things, and that he . . . governs events, especially our deaths and captivity."

Most African groups shared the Igbo belief in one supreme god. They understood the Christian and Muslim idea of a single god, but many wanted to continue their own religious practices.

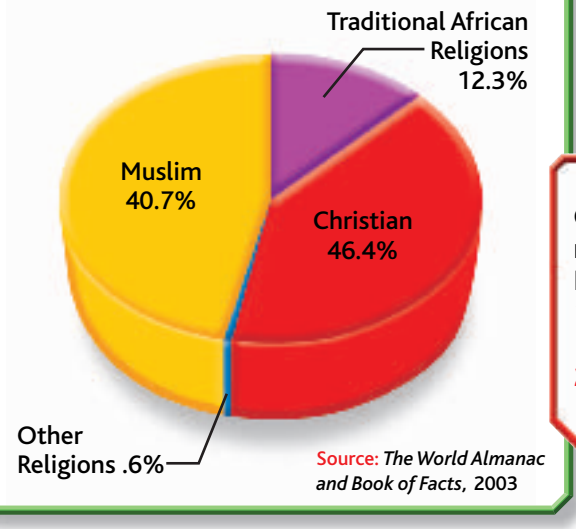
These practices varied from place to place. Some groups, like the Nanti in East Africa, thought people could talk directly with their god. Others, like the Igbo, thought their creator could only be spoken to through less powerful gods and goddesses who worked for him.

Even though Africans practiced their religion differently in different places, their beliefs served similar purposes. They provided rules for living and helped people stay in touch with their history.

When relatives died, many Africans believed their spirits stayed with the community. They believed these spirits could talk to the supreme god or help solve problems. As a result, many Africans honored their ancestors.

Reading Check **Explain** What was the role of ancestors in African religion?

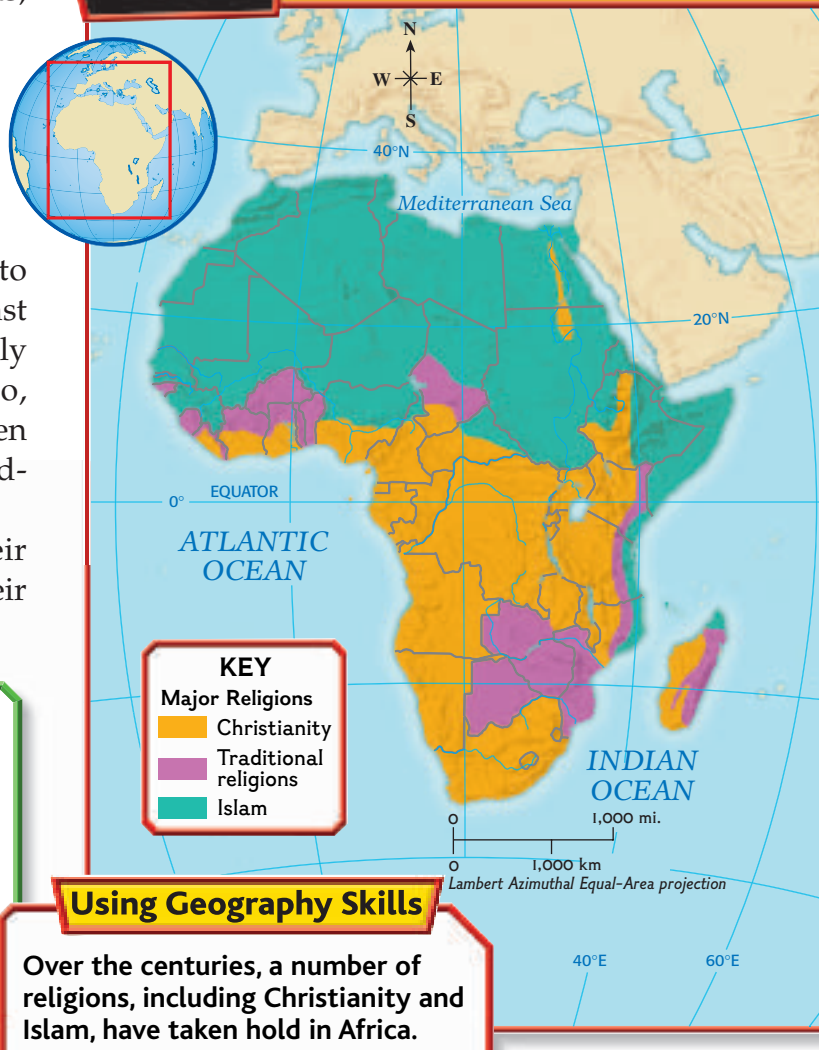
Religion in Africa



Source: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts*, 2003

African Religions Today

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



Using Geography Skills

Over the centuries, a number of religions, including Christianity and Islam, have taken hold in Africa.

1. What religion dominates the northern part of Africa?
2. In what areas are traditional religions the main type of religion?

Islam in Africa

Main Idea **Islam played an important role in medieval Africa, but long-held African beliefs and customs still remained strong.**

Reading Focus Have you ever changed your ideas because someone you respect has different ideas than you do? Learn how African rulers helped spread Islam and how Arabs and Africans influenced each other.

Ibn Battuta (IH • buhn bat • TOO • tah), a young Arab lawyer from Morocco, set out in 1325 to see the Muslim world. Since the A.D. 600s, the religion of Islam had spread from the Arabian Peninsula to Africa and elsewhere.

Ibn Battuta traveled throughout the lands of Islam for almost 30 years. He covered a distance of more than 73,000 miles (117,482 km). When Ibn Battuta arrived in West Africa in 1352, Islam had been practiced there for hundreds of years. Yet he soon realized that not all people in West Africa accepted Islam. Many people in the countryside still followed traditional African religions. Islam was popular in the cities where rulers and traders accepted it by choice or because it helped them trade with Muslim Arabs.

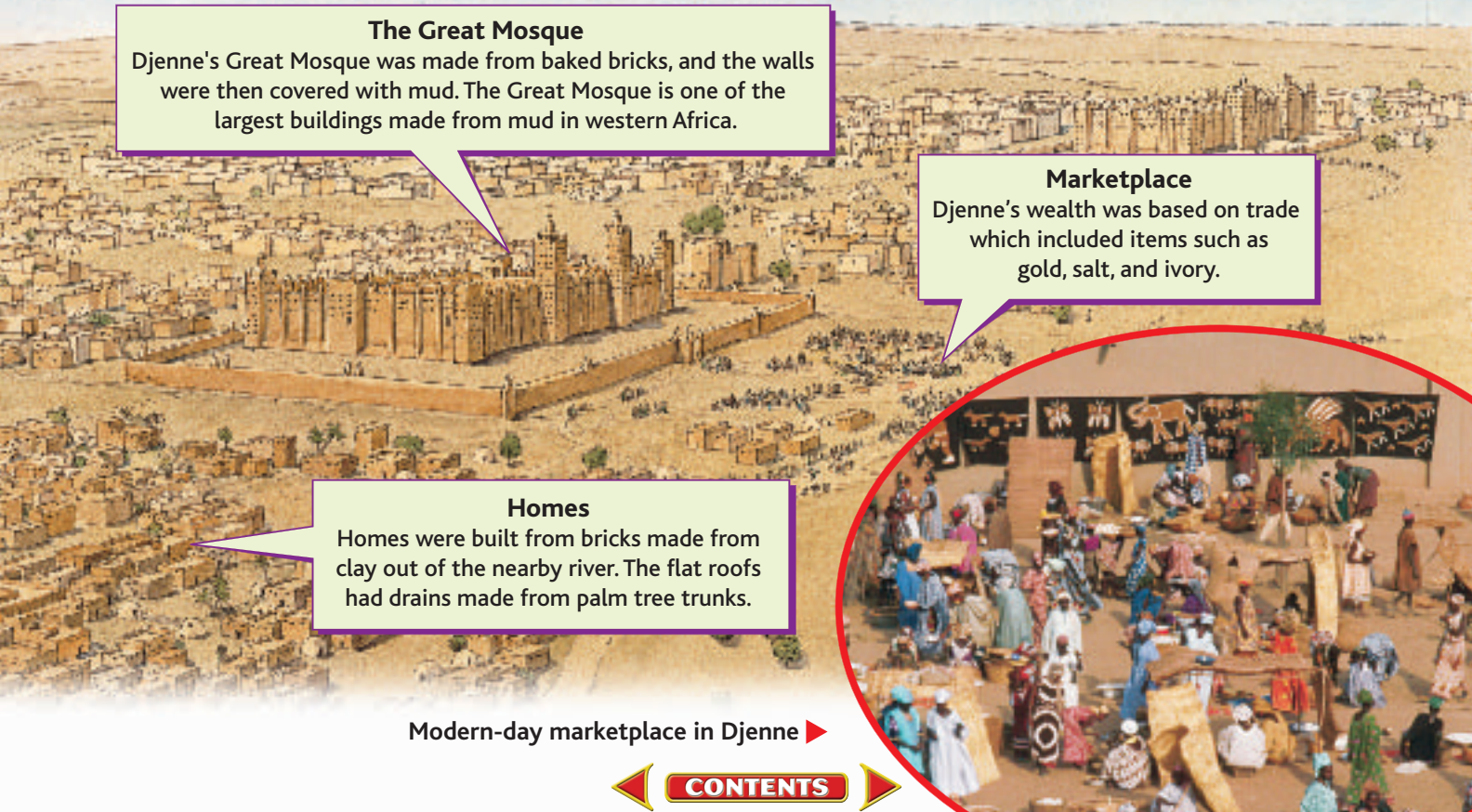
Some Muslims complained that Sundiata Keita and Sunni Ali—western Africa's two great empire builders—did not do enough to win people over to Islam. The two leaders were more concerned about stopping rebellions than spreading religion.

Ibn Battuta found things in West Africa that surprised him. He was amazed that women did not cover their faces with a veil,

Charles & Josette Lenars/CORBIS

The City of Djenne

Like Timbuktu, the city of Djenne became a center for both trade and Islam. Traders from the deserts to the north and the rain forests to the south met at Djenne, located on the Bani River. The first Great Mosque at Djenne was probably built in the 1200s.
Did all of the people in West Africa accept Islam? Explain.



Modern-day marketplace in Djenne ▶

as was the Muslim custom. However, he did find that West Africans studied the Quran, the Muslim holy book. "They zealously [eagerly] learn the Quran by heart," he wrote.

Mali and Mansa Musa Much of what pleased Ibn Battuta was the work of Mansa Musa. Mansa Musa had allowed different religions but had worked to make Islam stronger. He used the wealth of Mali to build more mosques, or Muslim places of worship. He also set up libraries at Timbuktu, which collected books from all over the Muslim world.

In 1324 Mansa Musa made Mali known to other parts of the world when he set out on a long journey to the city of **Makkah** (MAH•kuh), also known as Mecca. As you read in the chapter on Islam, all Muslims are supposed to make a pilgrimage to the Muslim holy city of Makkah. When Mansa Musa set out on his trip, however, he made sure everybody knew he was the leader of a great empire.

Mansa Musa's caravan had thousands of people, including enslaved people, and 100 pack camels. Each camel carried gold. While in Makkah, Mansa Musa convinced some of Islam's finest architects, teachers, and writers to return with him to Mali. There they helped spread Islam in West Africa.

Songhai and Askia Muhammad Sunni Ali practiced the traditional religion of the Songhai people. However, he declared himself a Muslim to keep the support of townspeople. After Sunni Ali died, his son refused to follow his father's example.

As you read earlier, Muhammad Ture, one of Sunni Ali's generals, saw a chance to take over the government. With the support of Muslim townspeople, he declared himself king. In a bloody war, he drove Sunni Ali's family from Songhai. He then took the name Askia, a rank in the Songhai army.

Primary Source: The Sultan of Mali

The sultan in this passage is Mansa Musa. He is described by an Arab scholar named Ibn Fadl Allah al Omari.

"The sultan of this kingdom presides in his palace on a great balcony called *bembe* where he has a great seat of ebony that is like a throne fit for a large and tall person: on either side it is flanked by elephant tusks turned towards each other. His arms [weapons] stand near him, being all of gold, saber, lance, quiver, bow and arrows. He wears wide trousers made of about twenty pieces [of stuff] of a kind which he alone may wear."

—Ibn Fadl Allah al Omari, "Mali in the Fourteenth Century"

▲ Mansa Musa

DBQ Document-Based Questions

What impression did Mansa Musa want to make on newcomers to his kingdom? How do you know?

Under **Askia Muhammad** (ahs•KEE•uh moh•HAH•muhd), Songhai built the largest empire in medieval West Africa. He kept local courts in place but told them to honor Muslim laws. He also made Timbuktu an important center of Islamic culture and set up some 150 schools to teach the Quran.

History Online

Web Activity Visit jat.glencoe.com and click on *Chapter 13—Student Web Activity* to learn more about medieval Africa.

Giraudon/Art Resource, NY

Biography

Mansa Musa

Ruled 1312–1337

▲ Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa ruled the West African empire of Mali with great skill and organization. Under Mansa Musa's guidance, Mali became a great center of education, commerce, and the arts. Mali was one of the largest empires in the world at the time. In fact, the kingdom was so vast that Mansa Musa once bragged it would take a year to travel from the northern border to the southern border.

Despite Mali's enormous size and wealth, the kingdom was not well-known outside the continent of Africa. Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Makkah in 1324, however, announced Mali's riches and achievements to the world. Traveling on horseback, Mansa Musa was joined by many people, including 8,000 enslaved people, 100 camels to carry baggage, and 24,000 pounds of gold. Each person carried a staff of gold. According to Egyptian historians and the accounts of observers, Mansa Musa spent so much gold in Cairo, Egypt, that the value of gold dropped in Cairo and did not recover for more than 12 years.

Mansa Musa's famous pilgrimage to Makkah brought attention to his kingdom. Mali was included on world maps as early as 1339. Many European nations and kingdoms in North Africa and the Middle East wished to establish trade connections with Mali and gain some of its wealth. Mali's territory and trade connections expanded even further with the capture of the cities Gao and Timbuktu, which also flourished under Mansa Musa's rule.

▲ A village in Mali today

Then and Now

Mali was unnoticed by the rest of the world until Mansa Musa's pilgrimage. Is it possible for a present-day country to go unnoticed? Why or why not?

(t)Courtesy Museum of Maritimo (Barcelona); Ramon Manent/CORBIS, (b)Steven Rothfeld/Getty Images

The empire survived family disputes. But, as you have read, it did not survive the guns of Moroccan invaders. The invasion in 1591 shattered the empire.

Islam in East Africa In 1331 Ibn Battuta visited Mogadishu, a trading port on the East African coast. Its **sultan** (SUHL•tuhn), or leader, said in perfect Arabic, "You have honored our country by coming." A moment later, Ibn Battuta heard the sultan speak in **Swahili** (swah•HEE•lee).

The word *Swahili* comes from an Arabic word meaning "people of the coast." By 1331, however, it had come to mean two things: the unique culture of East Africa's coast and the language spoken there.

The Swahili culture and language, which exist in East Africa today, are a blend of African and Muslim influences. African influences came from the cultures of Africa's interior. Muslim influences came from Arab and Persian settlers.

When Europeans from Portugal arrived on the coast in the early 1500s, they tried to destroy the Swahili culture. The Swahili responded by halting inland trade. In the end, the Swahili culture outlived European rule.

Islam's Impact on Africa Islam had a far-reaching impact on northern and eastern Africa. Africans who accepted Islam also adopted Islamic laws and ideas about right and wrong. Sometimes these changes were opposed by people who favored traditional African ways.

Islam also advanced learning. Muslim schools drew students from many parts of Africa and introduced the Arabic language to many Africans. Islam also influenced African art and buildings. Muslim architects built beautiful mosques and palaces in Timbuktu and other cities.

Reading Check **Explain** How did Askia Muhammad gain control of Songhai?

History Online
Homework Helper Need help with the material in this section? Visit jat.glencoe.com

Section 2 Review

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

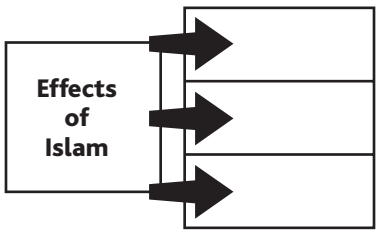
- The empires of West Africa were ruled by kings, who closely controlled trade and divided their lands among lesser chiefs to aid in governing.
- Many African religions believed in a single creator and honored the spirits of ancestors.
- Islam became the dominant religion in the kingdoms of West and East Africa.

What Did You Learn?

1. How did the kings of Ghana hold tightly to their power?
2. How did Mansa Musa attempt to strengthen Islam in Mali?

Critical Thinking

3. **Cause and Effect** Draw a diagram to show the effects of Islam on West and East Africa.



4. **Analyze** How did having the central authority rest with a single person benefit the king, individuals, and the kingdom? How is this model of a government reflected in modern government?
5. **Expository Writing** Imagine you were a witness to Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Makkah. Write a newspaper article describing the pilgrimage.
6. **Reading** **Compare and Contrast** Draw a Venn diagram to compare the leadership of Mansa Musa and Askia Muhammad.

Section 3

African Society and Culture

Get Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

By the time Europeans came to Africa, people all over the continent had developed complex cultures. For most Africans, life centered on farming villages, like the ones you will read about in this section. Here the family formed the basis of society.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- The Bantu migrations helped shape many cultures in Africa south of the Sahara. *(page 469)*
- The African slave trade changed greatly when Muslims and Europeans began taking captives from the continent. *(page 472)*
- Enslaved Africans developed rich cultures that influenced many other cultures, including our own. *(page 474)*

Locating Places

Benue River (BAYN • way)

Meeting People

Dahia al-Kahina
(dah • HEE • ah ahl • kah • HEE • nah)

Nzinga (ehn • ZIHN • gah)

Building Your Vocabulary

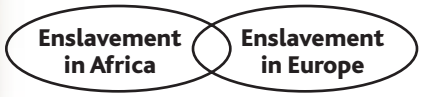
extended family

matrilineal (MA • truh • LIH • nee • uhl)

oral history

Reading Strategy

Compare and Contrast Create a Venn diagram like the one below showing the similarities and differences between the enslavement of Africans in Africa and the enslavement of Africans in Europe.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC When & Where?

3000 B.C.

c. 3000 B.C. Bantu begin migration across Africa

A.D. 1000

c. A.D. 650 Queen Dahia al-Kahina fights Muslims

1500

c. 1441 First enslaved Africans arrive in Europe

Life in Medieval Africa

Main Idea **The Bantu migrations helped shape many cultures in Africa south of the Sahara.**

Reading Focus Have you ever noticed that even though people are different, they all have some things in common? Read to learn why people in different regions of Africa have similar traditions and cultures.

Around 3000 B.C., fishing groups along the **Benue River** (BAYN • way) in present day eastern Nigeria packed belongings in their canoes and moved south and west. The wanderers called themselves *Bantu,* meaning "the people."

The Bantu traveled slowly and by different routes. At least some paddled up the Congo River—a waterway twisting 2,700 miles (4,345 km) through the rain forests. Many settled, for a time, in the grasslands of central Africa. From there, they fanned out over much of the land south of the Sahara. By A.D. 400, Bantu peoples had settled much of Africa.

Historians are not sure why the Bantu left their homeland. Perhaps the land became too crowded. Maybe farmers wore out the soil. Or the Bantu may have just drifted, the way pioneers sometimes do.

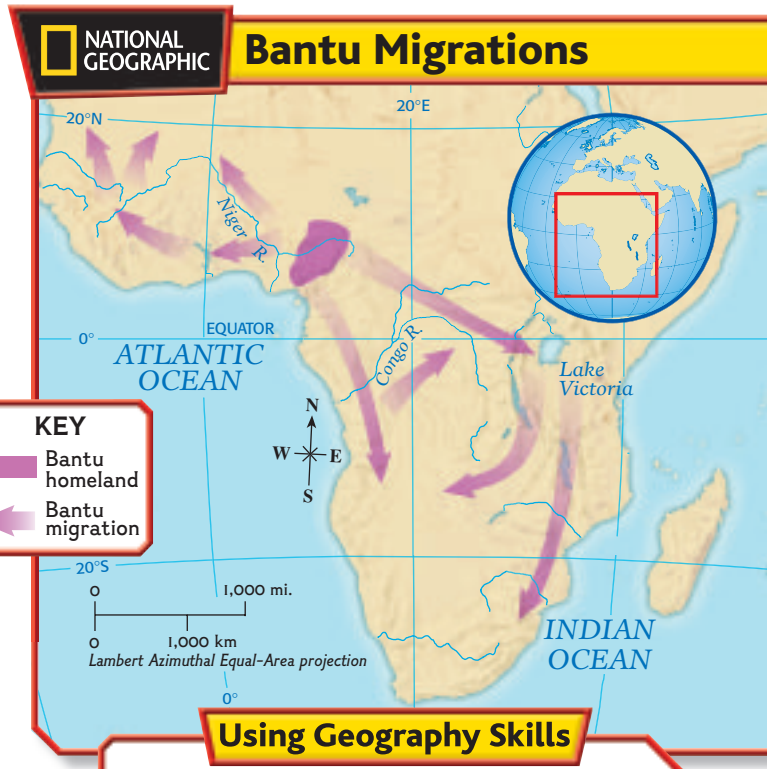
Wherever they went, the Bantu took their culture with them. They spread skills such as pottery making, mining, and ironworking. They also spread their language. Today more than 120 million Africans speak hundreds of Bantu languages, including Swahili.

The Bantu migrations, or movements of a large number of people, are the reason people all across Africa share some common ideas and traditions. The Bantu, for example, believed in one supreme creator and a spirit world where ancestors live. As you read in the last section, this was a common belief in many places in Africa.

Importance of Family The family formed the basis of African society. People often lived in **extended families,** or families made up of several generations. They included anywhere from ten to hundreds of members.

Many villages, especially Bantu villages, were **matrilineal** (MA • truh • LIH • nee • uhl). They traced their descent through mothers rather than fathers. When a woman married, however, she joined her husband's family. To make up for the loss, her family received gifts—cloth, metal tools, cattle, or goats—from the husband's family.

All families valued children greatly. They saw them as a link between the past and the future. Some people, like the Yoruba of what is today Nigeria, believed



Using Geography Skills

The Bantu wandered from their homeland around 3000 B.C.

1. Along which river did the Bantu people travel when they migrated west?
2. How did the Bantu migration affect cultures throughout southern Africa?

▲ This panel shows a family from the Congo at work.
What was an extended family in Bantu society?

an ancestor might be reborn in a child. They also knew children guaranteed that the family would live on. In praising the family, one Yoruba poet wrote:

> **"When a group of boys, girls,**
> **men, or wives,**
> **Go together in a happy company,**
> **Dignity attends them in**
> **every step.**
> . . . . . .
> **—Yoruba, "Dignity"**

Education and Community In Africa's villages, education was carried out by the family and other villagers. Children learned the history of their people and the skills needed as adults.

In West Africa, griots, or storytellers, helped in schooling. They kept alive an **oral history**—the stories passed down from generation to generation. Many stories included a lesson about living. Lessons also were given through short proverbs. One Bantu proverb stated: "A good deed will make a good neighbor." Grandparents and other older people also kept oral histories alive.

Role of Women As in most medieval societies, women in Africa acted mostly as wives and mothers. Men had more rights and controlled much of what women did. Visitors to Africa, however, saw exceptions. European explorers were amazed to learn that women served as soldiers in some African kingdoms.

African women also won fame as rulers. In the A.D. 600s, Queen **Dahia al-Kahina** (dah • HEE • uh ahl • kah • HEE • nah) led the fight against the Muslim invasion of her kingdom, which was located about where Mauritania is today. Another woman ruler was Queen **Nzinga** (ehn • ZIHN • gah), who ruled lands in what are now Angola and Congo. She spent almost 40 years battling Portuguese slave traders.

Reading Check **Explain** How were Bantu families organized?

Jason Laure

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Biography

Queen Nzinga

c. 1582–1663

Angolan Warrior-Leader

▲ Enslaved Africans in a ship's hold being taken to America.

It was rare in the 1600s for women to take active roles in politics and war, but one African woman—Queen Nzinga of Matamba—was known for her military leadership and political skills. Nzinga was the daughter of the king of the Ndongo people. The Ndongo lived in southwest Africa in what is today called Angola. Nzinga quickly learned archery and hunting. She was intelligent and a natural athlete. Nzinga's father failed to notice his daughter. He was too busy defending the kingdom from the Portuguese, who wanted to buy enslaved Africans and ship them overseas.

Even though she was female, Nzinga knew she could be a strong leader. She did not want to learn the enemy's language, but she soon realized that it could benefit her. She asked a captured priest to teach her Portuguese.

In 1623 Nzinga became queen. She declared all of her territory to be free territory and promised that all enslaved Africans who made it to the kingdom would be free. For nearly 30 years, she led her people in battles against the Portuguese. She allied with other African kingdoms to seal the trade routes used to ship enslaved Africans out of the country. In 1662 she negotiated a peace agreement with the Portuguese. She died the next year at age 81.

◀ The Portuguese built Elmire Castle on the coast of Ghana to hold enslaved Africans before shipping them overseas.

Then and Now

Do research to find the name of a modern female leader. Compare her leadership skills to those of Queen Nzinga.

(t) National Maritime Museum, London, (b) Maggie Steber/CORBIS SABA

Slavery

Main Idea **The African slave trade changed greatly when Muslims and Europeans began taking captives from the continent.**

Reading Focus You know that there was a time in American history when people of African ancestry were enslaved. Read to learn about slavery in African society and the beginning of the European slave trade.

In 1441 a Portuguese sea captain sailed down Africa's western coast. His goal was to bring the first African captives back to Portugal. During the voyage, the captain and his nine sailors seized 12 Africans—men, women, and boys. The ship then sailed back to Portugal. These captives represented only a small portion of a slave trade that would grow into the millions.

Slavery Within Africa Europeans did not invent slavery. For a long time, it had existed throughout the world. In Africa, Bantu chiefs raided nearby villages for captives. These captives became laborers or were freed for a payment.

Africans also enslaved criminals or enemies taken in war. These enslaved Africans became part of the Saharan trade. However, as long as Africans stayed in Africa, hope of escape still existed. Enslaved Africans might also win their freedom through hard work or by marrying a free person.

The trade in humans also grew as the trade with Muslim merchants increased. The Quran forbade enslavement of Muslims. Muslims, however, could enslave non-Muslims. Arab traders, therefore, began to trade horses, cotton, and other goods for enslaved, non-Muslim Africans.

When Europeans arrived in West Africa, a new market for enslaved Africans opened. Africans armed with European guns began raiding villages to seize captives to sell.

▲ On a slave ship, enslaved people were transported in the dark, crowded spaces of the ship's cargo deck. ***Why were enslaved Africans used on Portuguese plantations?***

The European Slave Trade In 1444 a Portuguese ship docked at a port in Portugal. Sailors unloaded the cargo—235 enslaved Africans. Tears ran down the faces of some. Others cried for help. A Portuguese official described the scene:

> **"But to increase their sufferings still more, . . . was it needful to part fathers from sons, husbands from wives, brothers from brothers."**
>
> **—Gomes Eannes de Zurara, as quoted in *The Slave Trade***

Barely three years had passed since the arrival of the first African captives in Portugal. Some merchants who had hoped

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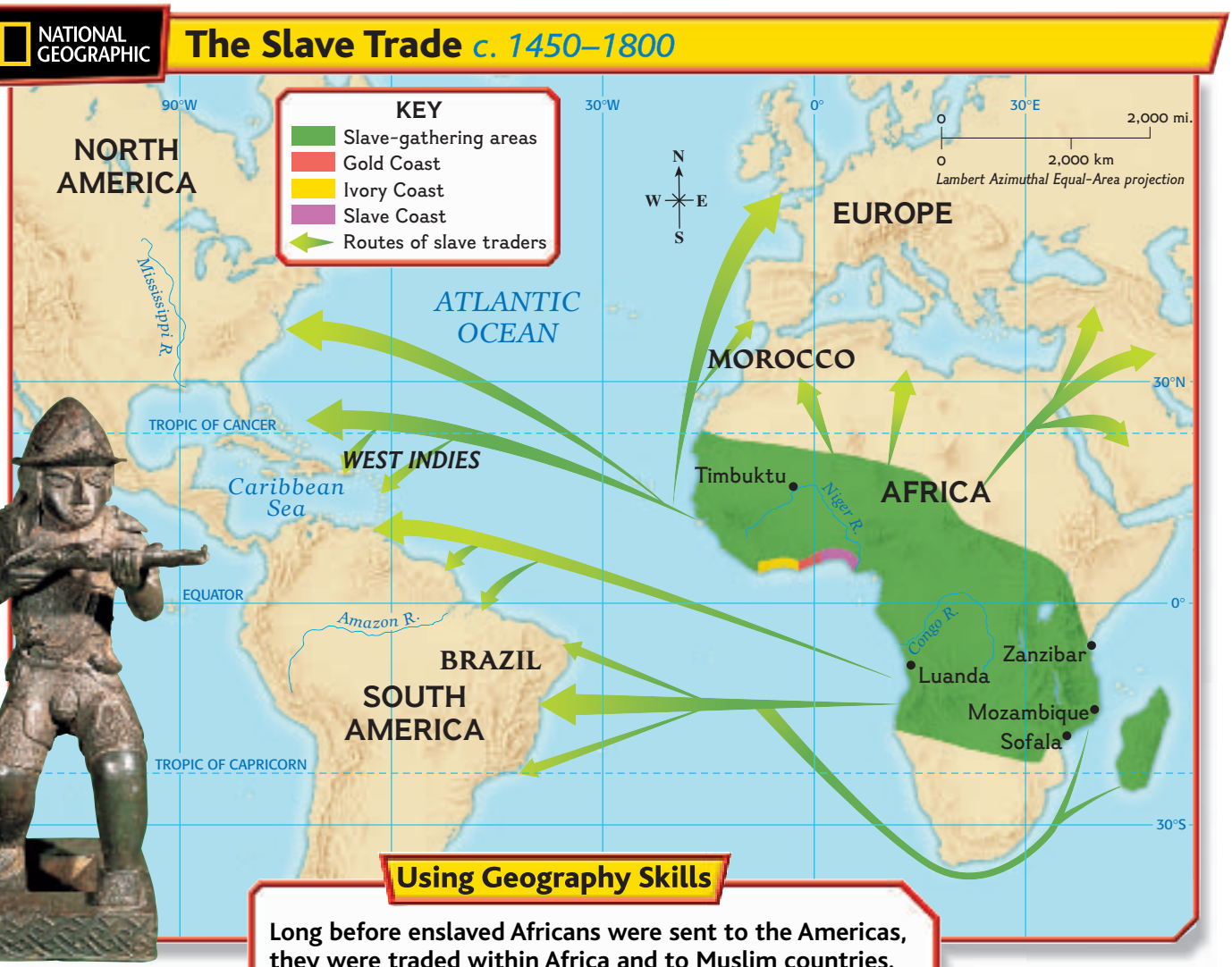
to sell gold brought from Africa now sold humans instead. At first, most enslaved Africans stayed in Portugal, working as laborers. This changed when the Portuguese settled the Atlantic islands of Madeira, the Azores, and Cape Verde. There the climate was perfect for growing cotton, grapes, and sugarcane on plantations, or huge farms.

Harvesting sugarcane was hard labor. Planters could not pay high wages to get workers, so they used enslaved Africans instead. Many Africans had farming skills and the ability to make tools. Enslaved people were not paid and could be fed and kept cheaply. By 1500, Portugal was the world's leading supplier of sugar.

The rest of Europe followed Portugal's example. In the late 1400s, Europeans arrived in the Americas. They set up sugar plantations and brought enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to work the fields. They also used enslaved people to grow tobacco, rice, and cotton.

Reading Check **Analyze** How did exploration change the African slave trade?

▲ West African statue of Portuguese soldier



Using Geography Skills

Long before enslaved Africans were sent to the Americas, they were traded within Africa and to Muslim countries.

1. From which part of Africa were the most enslaved people taken?
2. To what parts of the Americas were enslaved people taken?

Michael Holford

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The Way It Was

Focus on Everyday Life

Kente Cloth *Kente* is the name of a colorful woven cloth. Its name comes from a word that means "basket." The first weavers were mostly men. They used fibers to make cloth that looked like the patterns in baskets. Strips were sewn together to make colorful patterns. *Kente* was worn by tribal chiefs and is still popular today. This African folktale about *kente* cloth has been handed down for generations:

One day two friends walked through a rain forest and saw a spider creating designs in its web. They took the spider web to show their friends and family. They were greatly upset when the web fell apart in their hands. They returned the next day to watch and learn as the spider did a weaving dance and spun another web. The friends took their newfound skills to their looms and made colorful cloth they called *kente*.

African women wearing *kente* cloth

Connecting to the Past

1. Why does the legend suggest that Africans learned to weave *kente* cloth from a spider?
2. Why do you think the first *kente* cloth weavers were mostly men?

African Culture

Main Idea **Enslaved Africans developed rich cultures that influenced many other cultures, including our own.**

Reading Focus Do you have any traditions that have been in your family for a long time? Read to learn how Africans took their culture with them when they were enslaved and sent overseas.

"We are almost a nation of dancers, musicians, and poets," declared Olaudah Equiano in describing the Igbo people of West Africa. He might have added artists, weavers, woodcarvers, and metalworkers too. African peoples like the Igbo excelled in many art forms.

When slave traders seized Africans like Equiano from their homelands, they also uprooted their cultures. Africans carried these cultures with them in what has become known as the African Diaspora—the spreading of African people and culture around the world.

People of African descent held on to memories of their cultures and passed them down from generation to generation. The heritage of Africa can be seen and heard in the United States today—not just in the faces and voices of African descendants but in their gifts to our culture.

African Art Cave paintings are the earliest form of African art we know about. They show people hunting animals, dancing, and doing everyday chores. As in other parts of the world, African art and religion developed hand in hand. Early African cave paintings, as well as later art, almost always had some religious meaning or use. Woodcarvers made masks and statues, for example, to celebrate African religious beliefs. Each carved piece of wood captured some part of the spiritual world.

(l)Dennis Wisken/Lonely Planet Images, (r)Lawrence Migdale/Getty Images

African works of art also told stories and served practical purposes. Artists working in wood, ivory, or bronze showed the faces of important leaders, everyday people, and, later, European explorers and traders. Weavers designed cloth similar to cloth still worn today. You may have seen the brightly colored kente cloth of West Africa. Many people wear it today.

Music and Dance Music played a part in almost all aspects of African life. People used it to express their religious feelings or to get through an everyday task, like planting a field.

In many African songs, a singer calls out a line, then other singers repeat it back. Musical instruments, such as drums, whistles, horns, flutes, or banjos, were used to keep the beat.

Africans believed dance allowed the spirits to express themselves. So they used it to celebrate important events such as birth and death. Nearly everybody danced. Lines of men and women swayed and clapped their hands. Individual dancers

Linking Past & Present

African Music

THEN Traditional African music comes from many different sounds and rhythms. Every culture in Africa contributed to its development. Some used drums. Others used wind and string instruments. Many imitated nature through voice and dance. African music was handed down from one generation to another.

▲ Traditional African musicians

▼ Modern-day musicians

NOW Traditional African music influences rap, hip-hop, pop, and rock music. The use of drums and a steady beat comes from African tribal music. ***Can you name current groups or artists who have been impacted by the African musical style?***

(l)Werner Forman/Art Resource, NY, (r)Andy Sacks/Getty Images

Griots still share the stories and lessons of their ancestors. ***What were traditional African stories often about?***

leaped and twirled. In the background, drummers sounded out the rhythm.

Enslaved Africans sometimes relied on music to remind them of their homeland. Songs of hardship eventually developed into a type of music that we know today as the blues. Songs of religious faith and hopes for freedom grew into spirituals or gospel songs. Over time, other forms of African-based music developed, such as ragtime, jazz, rock and roll, and, more recently, rap.

Storytelling Africans also kept alive their storytelling tradition. A few enslaved Africans escaped and were able to record their stories. Others retold their stories aloud. Those who heard the stories repeated them. They also retold tales taught by griots in the African homeland. Popular stories often told how small animals, such as turtles and rabbits, outsmarted larger ones.

In more recent times, some African Americans have renewed ties with their past by taking African names or giving them to their children. This also helps keep alive African history and culture.

Reading Check **Explain** Why did Africans use dance to celebrate important events?

History Online

Homework Helper Need help with the material in this section? Visit jat.glencoe.com

Section 3 Review

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

- Many Africans south of the Sahara lived in small villages. Family was very important, and women had fewer rights than men.
- Africans had kept slaves long before they began to trade enslaved persons to Muslims and Europeans.
- As enslaved Africans were taken to new areas, African culture, including art, music, and story-telling, spread around the world.

What Did You Learn?

1. What was the African Diaspora?
2. What is the earliest form of African art known? Describe some of the subjects portrayed in the art.

Critical Thinking

3. **Organizing Information** Draw a diagram like the one below. Fill in details about African music and dance.

4. **Compare** How were African art and religion related?
5. **Identify** What was Queen Dahia al-Kahina's greatest accomplishment?
6. **Infer** Why do you think some Africans liked tales in which small animals outsmarted larger animals?
7. **Persuasive Writing** Portuguese plantation owners relied on slave labor to help them grow sugarcane. Suppose you had a family member who was enslaved on a plantation. Write a letter to the plantation owner explaining why this practice is unacceptable.

Jason Laure

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Chapter 13 Reading Review

Section 1 The Rise of African Civilizations

Vocabulary
plateau
griot
dhow

Focusing on the Main Ideas
- Africa has a vast and varied landscape. *(page 445)*
- West African empires grew rich from trade. *(page 447)*
- Africa's rain forests blocked invaders and provided resources. *(page 450)*
- East African kingdoms and states became centers for trade and new ideas. *(page 451)*

Section 2 Africa's Government and Religion

Vocabulary
clan
sultan
Swahili

Focusing on the Main Ideas
- The growth of West African empires led to the growth of centralized governments ruled by kings. *(page 461)*
- Traditional African religions shared certain beliefs and provided a guide for living together. *(page 463)*
- Islam played an important role in medieval Africa, but long-held African beliefs and customs still remained strong. *(page 464)*

Section 3 African Society and Culture

Vocabulary
extended family
matrilineal
oral history

Focusing on the Main Ideas
- The Bantu migrations helped shape many cultures in Africa south of the Sahara. *(page 469)*
- The African slave trade changed greatly when Muslims and Europeans began taking captives from the continent. *(page 472)*
- Enslaved Africans developed rich cultures that influenced many other cultures, including our own. *(page 474)*

▲ Family life in the Congo

Jason Laure

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Chapter 13 Assessment and Activities

Review Vocabulary

Write *True* for each true statement. Replace the word in italics to make false statements true.

___ 1. Wooden boats known as *griots* were powered by triangular sails.

___ 2. An area of high, flat land is a *plateau.*

___ 3. Each district in Ghana usually included a chief's *clan.*

___ 4. African *dhows* are storytellers.

___ 5. *Matrilineal* societies trace their descent through mothers.

___ 6. *Swahili* culture and language exist in Africa today.

Review Main Ideas

Section 1 • The Rise of African Civilizations

7. What were the advantages of living in Africa's rain forests?

8. Why were East African kingdoms and states important?

Section 2 • Africa's Government and Religion

9. How were West African empires governed?

10. Describe the religious beliefs of medieval Africans.

Section 3 • African Society and Culture

11. What was the result of the Bantu migrations?

12. How did slavery in medieval Africa change?

Critical Thinking

13. **Predict** What do you think would have happened in Ghana if the people had been allowed to trade with gold nuggets instead of gold dust?

14. **Explain** What caused the decline of Ghana and Songhai?

15. **Analyze** Why do you think the Bantu language changed as people moved into different parts of Africa?

Review Reading Skill: Compare and Contrast

Making Comparisons

16. Read the paragraph below, then create a Venn diagram that shows similarities and differences between the continents of Africa and North America.

> Africa is the world's second-largest continent. The United States fits into Africa three times, with room to spare. The Equator slices through the middle of the continent. Hot, steamy rain forests stretch along each side of it. Yet the rain forests cover only 10 percent of the land.

To review this skill, see pages 442–443.

Geography Skills

Study the map below and answer the following questions.

17. **Human/Environment Interaction** What obstacle did the empires in western Africa have to overcome in order to trade with cities in northern Africa?

18. **Location** In which parts of Africa do you think people had the best opportunities to trade by sea?

19. **Movement** How do you think more inland water routes would have changed the cultures of Africa?

Read to Write

20. **Descriptive Writing** Write an essay describing evidence of the African Diaspora in your community, city, or state. Make note of music, dance, literature, art, and other aspects of culture.

21. **Using Your FOLDABLES** Use the answers in your foldable to create a poster that shows what Africa was like in the past. Draw sketches, create maps, find pictures of artifacts, and so on to visually describe the cultures.

History Online
Self-Check Quiz To help you prepare for the Chapter Test, visit jat.glencoe.com

Using Technology

22. **Multimedia Presentation** Choose a present-day African country to research. Use the Internet to find information on that country from its early history to the present. Then create a multimedia presentation about that country, including images and a time line of important events in the country's history. Be sure to include aspects of culture, natural resources, and government.

Linking Past and Present

23. **Narrative Writing** Even though people record many things on paper or on a computer, they often tell stories about their lives as oral histories. Ask a family member, neighbor, teacher, or other adult to tell a story that has been passed down in his or her family. Record that oral history in narrative form.

Primary Source Analyze

This report was written by the first engineer ever to see the ruins of Great Zimbabwe.

"The ruins are . . . terraces, which rise up continually from the base to the apex [highest point] of all the hills. . . . The way that the ancients seem to have levelled off the contours of the various hills . . . is very astonishing, as they seem to have been levelled with as much exactitude as we can accomplish with our best mathematical instruments."

—Telford Edwards, as quoted in *The Mystery of the Great Zimbabwe*

DBQ Document-Based Questions

24. What in particular amazes the engineer about Great Zimbabwe?
25. How do you think the people of Great Zimbabwe accomplished such precision?